

How to help Area organizations support service members both in the field and on the mend

By Maria Higgins

With injured service members arriving for treatment at nearby Landstuhl Army Medical Center, and individual families and offices saying goodbye to "gulf-bound" loved ones and colleagues, 6th Area Support Group community members may feel the current war hitting close to home – and the urge to help hitting close to the heart.

The following are ongoing outlets for anyone in the Stuttgart area wishing to donate time, money or essential items to aid soldiers in the field or on the mend.

United Service Organization

With oversight for USO branches in Landstuhl and Ramstein, the USO-Kaiserslautern is on the front lines for aiding recuperating service members, who are all transported here for at least part of their recovery.

In short order, the group helped stand up a "Touch of Home" USO lounge within the 100-bed Contingency Aero-Medical Staging Facility at Ramstein, where wounded men and women wait for medical evacuation from Landstuhl to the United States.

Here, the service members can "get out of bed and take a comfortable respite from the stresses in their lives right now," said Director Walt Murren.

Also, since Jan. 28, the USO has been aiding the deployment of forces at Ramstein's Joint Mobility Processing Center (commonly called the Purple Ramp). This facility is the last stage of the deployment process; service members wait here before flying to their operational area.

Anyone wishing to volunteer with either the AMSF or JMPC – by supporting vendors, staff and other volunteers – is welcome to receive training. "We'll work you into the schedule, but it's a long drive" for Stuttgart residents, said Murren.

There is also a need for DVDs, GameBoys, board games, music CDs, and any other entertainment items that can help alleviate boredom for recuperating troops, said Murren.

Most beneficial, however, are cards and letters of support thanking the service members for their sacrifices, Murren said. "They need uplifting things to see. We will post any supportive mail on the walls at both facilities, and rotate the letters so they all get a chance to be viewed."

Donated items and letters of support can either be mailed directly to **USO-Kaiserslautern** (Unit 23152, APO AE 09227) or locally to the **USO-Stuttgart** (Patch Barracks, Unit 30401, APO AE 09107), which will deliver the contributions to Murren's center.

Murren will gladly provide updates on needed items, which he said "evolve as [the war] changes." He is reachable by phone at 489-7233/7851/civ. 0631-536-6033, or via e-mail at Murrenw.uso@cmtymail.26ASGarmy.mil.



Lance Cpl. Brian Wickliffe

Marine Staff Sgt. Jose Salazar finds an innovative way to stay moderately clean at Camp Viking, Kuwait. Harsh desert living conditions make donations of comfort items like lip balm and wet wipes much appreciated.

Landstuhl Chaplain's Office

"A large amount of volunteers have stepped up to the plate" and are being coordinated in part by the Landstuhl Chaplain's Office, said Loretta Wood, executive assistant.

Anyone interested in helping hospitalized patients at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, collecting and organizing donations from commercial and private organizations and businesses, providing baked goods for patients and staff, or assisting with the needs of Fisher House (where family members of wounded service members often stay) is welcome to call Wood and inquire about current needs.

At press time, the biggest need was for donated new shoes (sizes 9 to 13) for patients, preferably slip-ons or with Velcro closures.

For more information contact Wood at 486-8143/civ. 06371-86-8143, or call Fisher House at 486-6630/civ. 06371-86-6630.

Support services online

■ **On the Home Front** lists volunteer resources for people seeking to support American troops, their families and their communities. Launched by The Department of Defense and the USO Freedom Corps, the site can be found at www.usafreedomcorps.gov.

■ **Operation USA Care Package** accepts monetary contributions toward troop-bound deliveries of sunscreen, toiletries, prepaid telephone cards, disposable cameras and more. Sponsored by the USO, the site is located at www.usocares.org/home.

■ **Defend America** invites people to sign an online thank-you card for troops at www.defendamerica.mil.

■ **Operation Dear Abby** will send e-mail messages to deployed troops of any service from your home state via <http://anyservicemember.navy.mil>.

Wounded Warrior Hospital Fund

A special account set up last week by concerned members of the European Theater Command Center and EUCOM directorates who initially just "passed the hat," the Wounded Warrior Hospital Fund was established to purchase and donate items to hospitals in Landstuhl and Rota, Spain.

To contribute, stop by any Community Bank branch and ask to make a donation.

For details about the fund, or to donate stamped stationery, books, DVDs or other items useful to recovering service members, contact Col. J.D. Folsom, MARFOREUR liaison officer to EUCOM, at 430-5324/civ. 0711-680-5324.

Stuttgart Red Cross

The Panzer Kaserne-based Stuttgart Red Cross is one of 23 Red Cross stations in Germany, Belgium and Turkey, but serves as the hub for after-hours emergency service for all. Volunteers are needed to staff the after-hours call service and to serve as caseworkers for service members and their families.

"We're getting the job done every night, but if something changes dramatically our need [for additional volunteers] could become acute," said Sheila Miller, senior station manager.

For more information contact Heather Haiss, volunteer coordinator, at 431-2818/civ. 07031-15-818.

To learn more about opportunities to assist service members, read the April 25 edition of *The Citizen*. To let us know about ongoing efforts within the 6th ASG, e-mail citizen@6asg.army.mil or call 421-2046/civ. 0711-729-2046.

Lunchtime seminars help families deal with deployment

Story & photo by Melanie Casey

In conjunction with the Month of the Military Child, Army Community Service and the Family Advocacy Program on Patch Barracks are sponsoring a series of informal and informative lunchtime sessions aimed at helping parents and children communicate better in times of deployment.

The "Brown Bag" series sessions are free and open to everyone. The topics are timely and, for military families, timeless.

Since "knowledge is power," the Brown Bag discussions are aimed at helping families cope more effectively with stressful situations and "everyday problems."

The hourlong meetings stress awareness and prevention and provide the tools moth-

ers and fathers need to become better at the most important of their many jobs: parenting.

The sessions take place in the Army Community Service office (Patch Barracks, building 2307) Tuesdays, noon to 1 p.m.

The gatherings are led by members of the Family Advocacy Program, all of whom have experience and expertise in parent education.

The following is the remainder of the April schedule:

- April 9: *When Parents Get Angry*
 - April 16: *Talking to your Kids About World Events*
 - April 23: *When 'No' Gets You Nowhere*
- Classes are free and registration is not required – just pack a lunch and pick a topic.

For more information call ACS at 430-7176/civ. 0711-680-7176.



Discussion group members share a laugh during an April 3 "Brown Bag" session on reuniting after deployment. Sponsored by Army Community Service and the Family Advocacy Program, the lunchtime seminars are designed to help military families deal with separation.